

Strategy Research Project

THE COAST GUARD RESERVE OFFICER FOR 2020

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE COAST GUARD RESERVE OFFICER FOR 2020

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The United States Coast Guard is a dynamic military organization that is continuously changing to meet its multi-mission objectives. Based upon current trends, the demands placed on the Coast Guard will increase in the future. The American public will expect full execution of its national security and protection missions. The Coast Guard reserve officer is a vital partner in ensuring these missions are accomplished in a professional manner. However, unless action is taken soon, Coast Guard reserve officers will not be fully viable leaders, capable of implementing and succeeding in future missions. The current status quo of the Coast Guard reserve officer program cannot continue. This paper will discuss the concepts of professionalism and officership and examine three reserve officer career milestones: accessions/indoctrination, mid-grade officer technical expertise and development, and senior leader education. Recommendations for improving training and developing Coast Guard reserve officers will be presented with the objective of making them full-fledged members of the Coast Guard team.

THE COAST GUARD RESERVE OFFICER FOR 2010

Ten years from now, what I envision for the young enlisted or officer coming into the Coast Guard is that they know what career-path milestones there are, what skill sets they're supposed to get and when, and how to keep their qualifications current.¹

—RDML Sandra L. Stosz, USCG

Coast Guard reserve officers are essential members of the United States' strategic defense and readiness team. Reserve officers must be able to perform the same national security and protection missions as their active duty counterparts. Missions must be executed by active duty and reserve officers who remain current, adaptable, and responsive to the continual threats of the 21st century.

Since reserve officers are expected to perform the same duties as active duty members, the question arises, are these Coast Guard reserve officers currently being properly trained? Are they qualified for active duty service when they are called to participate? Do they exemplify the Coast Guard's motto of, Semper Paratus, "Always Ready"? A review of current training programs and human resources management practices indicates there is room for significant improvement. The way reserve officers are viewed, developed, trained, managed, and educated must change.

This paper will discuss the concepts of professionalism and officership and examine three reserve officer career milestones: accessions/indoctrination, mid-grade officer technical expertise and development, and senior leader education.

Recommendations for improving training and developing Coast Guard reserve officers will be presented with the objective of making them full-fledged members of the Coast Guard team.

What is in a Name?

Certain words are used synonymously with the term reservist. Active duty officers sometimes refer to reservists as “weekend warriors” and “part timers”. These terms suggest negative perceptions, feelings, and misconceptions. Images of incompetent, untrained, and non-essential individuals come to mind. These descriptions are inaccurate and need to change. The words active duty officer and reserve officer should both reflect thoughts of professionalism and officership. These words convey fundamental concepts that determine how military reserve officers are treated and how their training should be developed. The concept of professionalism and officership should become the bedrock and foundation for all Coast Guard reserve officer programs.

Professionalism

The reserve officer is more than just a person hired to perform a job. A reserve officer is a professional in the military profession. In *The Soldier and the State*, Samuel P. Huntington asserts, “The vocation of officership meets the principle criteria of professionalism”² and describes three distinct characteristics of a profession: expertise, responsibility, and corporateness.³ He stresses a professional acquires and develops specialized expertise and skills through prolonged education and extensive training⁴ and believes “the skill of the officer is neither a craft (which is primarily mechanical) nor an art (which requires unique and nontransferable talent).”⁵ Officers must exercise complex mental and decision making skills built upon extensive study and prolonged training.⁶ The same is true for the Coast Guard reserve officers’ development, which should be constant and span their entire career. This specialized expertise or skill

makes Coast Guard reserve officers vital members of American society for ensuring safety and security.

Professionalism is intertwined with responsibility. Responsibility is the manner in which a person uses his or her experience within a social context. Ultimately, the benefactor of any profession is the society.⁷ Coast Guard reserve officers' responsibilities are to protect and defend the American public. A social contract is established when each officer takes a binding oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. This responsibility makes Coast Guard reserve officers a dedicated group driven by more than mere monetary gain.

Corporateness begins when individuals of a profession manifest an innate consciousness of themselves which separates their collective group from laymen.⁸ This sense of corporateness is reinforced when an organization creates and enforces codes of behavior and professional responsibility.⁹ Coast Guard reserve officers have similar responsibilities as other maritime occupation practitioners; however they are held to a higher standard than their civilian counterparts. These separate standards are detailed in the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Reserve officers are required to conduct their professional and personal lives in accordance with the Coast Guard's core values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty. This corporateness contributes to Coast Guard reserve officers becoming a disciplined workforce with internalized ethical standards.

Andrew Abbott's book, *The System of Professions*, states, "The tasks of professions are human problems amenable to expert service."¹⁰ The Coast Guard, as a whole, deals with problems such as war, immigration, drug smuggling, and terrorism.

Active duty and reserve officers are expected to be professionals who find solutions when facing these problems. Abbott also emphasizes that a professional must have jurisdiction and acceptance from the public to be considered a legitimate professional.¹¹ Jurisdiction is established when certain “work” needs a person with expert knowledge to successfully engage and complete the task.¹² The Coast Guard reserve officer has formally been given jurisdiction to complete tasks and mitigate problems for the American public under multiple United States Codes.

Don M. Snider briefly ties Huntington’s and Abbott’s thoughts together in the following statement (substitute Army with Coast Guard):

The relationship between the Army officer and the Army profession is thus complete: officers, as individual professionals under the moral and legal mandates of their commissions, embody the expert knowledge of the profession and apply it to their practices. They are personally called to, motivated by, and identify strongly with that expert knowledge and its trusted application on behalf of the profession’s client, the American people.¹³

Coast Guard reserve officers make judgments based on the facts presented to them and then initiate an appropriate course of action. Their professional judgment is based on expertise, jurisdiction, corporateness, and responsibilities provided by the Coast Guard to its reserve officers.

Officership

A military officer must also demonstrate the qualities of officership. Officership is the active practice of executing the duties required of a commissioned officer and military leader. It is an officer’s actions and who he or she is.¹⁴ Officership is the commitment to lead, protect, train, and sacrifice everything for the Nation’s defense. Military officers are required to adhere to high standards of physical fitness, mental, and moral excellence. These enduring qualities are fostered, developed, and internalized

during the officer indoctrination phase and during the ensuing years of military service. The Coast Guard Academy takes four years to transform a civilian into a military officer. The Coast Guard Academy's website stresses that cadets must devote themselves to an honor concept and to be in service to others.¹⁵ These high virtues of "officership" are associated with and expected of our Nation's military officers.

Donald Phillips and Admiral James Loy in their book, *Character in Action*, give excellent examples of officership and professionalism. These characteristics were personified by a Coast Guard Lieutenant on September 11, 2001. After the World Trade Center was struck by a large passenger plane, panic was beginning to build while victims were evacuating from the ground zero area. Without direct guidance from his superiors, a Coast Guard Lieutenant quickly evaluated the situation and took action.

The Lieutenant coordinated numerous vessel shuttles to safely carry Americans away from the scene. He remained on site many hours and, when necessary, shifted his efforts from evacuation to running a vessel traffic system. Due to his expert coordination, medical supplies and equipment were transported, staged, and delivered to the first responders at ground zero.¹⁶ What were the driving concepts behind this officer's initiative, determination, devotion to duty, expertise, and decisiveness? The Lieutenant's actions epitomized two words: professionalism and officership.

Risks Associated with the Loss of Professionalism and Officership

The Coast Guard officer is an individual in a military profession that must be staffed by true professionals. The Coast Guard officer performs specific missions related to maritime safety and security. Coast Guard reserve officers are part of the total Coast Guard force and must be held to the same high standards as their active duty peers. Due to current training limitations, some missions are not well-suited for the

Coast Guard reservist. The Coast Guard reserve officer must be an expert who is able to meet the expectations of the American people. Substandard mission performance could lead to a harmed marine environment, damaged cargoes, compromised national security, and loss of life.

Coast Guard reserve officers must maintain the highest level of officership due to responsibilities entrusted to them. Americans entrust military officers to protect their freedoms and expect good stewardship over their sons, daughters, and government funding. If the Coast Guard loses the trust, faith, and support of the American public, they will no longer be considered professionals.

The Lighthouse of Officer Development and Career Milestones

The Coast Guard must focus on three career milestones to develop viable reserve officers for 2020. The Coast Guard must ensure the quality of its officer development programs. These programs are important for indoctrinating officers in essential concepts like officership and dynamic leadership, training them to become certified technical experts, and finally educating them to become senior leaders who practice strategic and critical thinking. As a result, a strong Coast Guard reserve officer corps will develop and maintain the trust and confidence of the American public.¹⁷

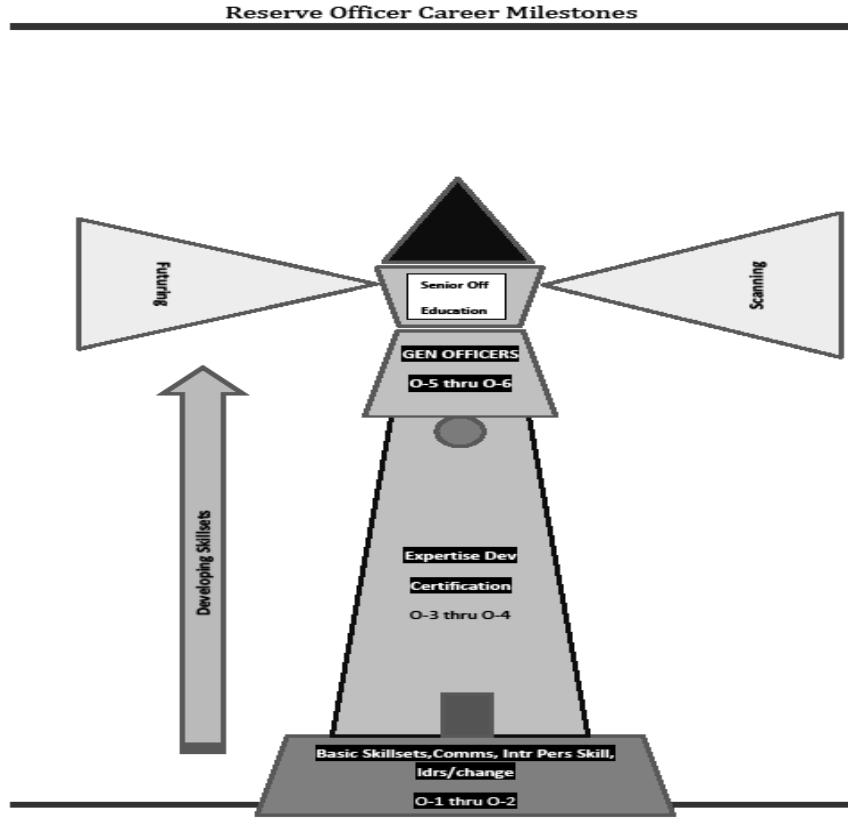


Figure 1. Lighthouse of Officer Development and Career Milestones

Junior Officer Accessions/Indoctrination = The Foundation

Figure 1 illustrates my concept for the Coast Guard reserve officer corps development process. The base or foundation of the lighthouse represents the indoctrination process of the reserve officer corps. Ensigns (O-1) and Lieutenants Junior Grade (O-2) form the foundation of the reserve officer corps. The commissioning source is not as important as the training and values he or she receives during the commissioning process. Great leaders are either born or created. In either case, leaders can be made better with proper development and growing strategic leader capabilities must begin during pre-commissioning training.¹⁸ Time must be invested to

ensure the foundation is strong and the cement is formed correctly, allowing it sufficient time to cure. If the foundation is weak, the entire structure it supports is in jeopardy of structural failure or collapse. The individual that is molded and developed by the Coast Guard in this early stage will eventually become the strategic leader of tomorrow.

Reserve officers are assessed and indoctrinated through four primary sources: The U.S. Coast Guard Academy, Officer Candidate School (OCS), Direct Commission Officers (DCO) programs, and the Selected Reserves Direct Commission program. These commissioning sources vary significantly regarding training and education on military professionalism and duties of officership. Academy graduates receive four years of development and training allowing them time to internalize core values and the concepts of officership and professionalism.

Officer Candidate School (OCS) is seventeen weeks in length. Indoctrination involves transitioning students from the civilian mind-set into the military life-style. OCS also provides a wide range of information necessary for completing and performing the duties of a Coast Guard officer.¹⁹ Although this program is not as long in duration as the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, over half of its participants are drawn from high performing enlisted personnel.²⁰ These enlisted personnel have already proven that they have integrated the service's core values through documented performance evaluations. These enlisted personnel also have proven themselves by completing basic training and their specialty schools. In addition, they have been selected to attend OCS through a very rigorous screening process. One of the advantages of having officers from this source is that they bring diversity. If the officer candidate has prior service, he or she

also brings an enlisted perspective, skillsets, and “real world” experience to the junior officer corps.

Direct Commission Officer (DCO) programs provide a venue for maritime academy graduates, aviators, lawyers, engineers, environmental specialists, and former military officers to become officers in the Coast Guard without attending OCS. The advantage of this program is that these individuals are already trained and certified in an advanced profession. If these officers were prior military, they have a proven performance record, are well-disciplined, and are familiar with military life and officership. DCO programs are three to five weeks in length and are completed at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. The duration of the program depends upon the member’s prior experience.

The final officer accession program is the Selected Reserve Direct Commission (SRDC) program. The formal training in this program is only three weeks in length and is known as the Reserve Officer Candidate Indoctrination (ROCI) course. There is a huge disparity between ROCI and other commissioning programs.²¹ This program trains and indoctrinates personnel with little or no military service within a short time frame. Upon completion of ROCI, an officer candidate becomes a commissioned officer. Three weeks are insufficient to develop basic leadership and communication skills and allow full indoctrination of military protocol, or to instill the fundamentals of professionalism and officership. There is also inadequate time to instill and internalize the core values of the Coast Guard. Unfortunately, most ROCI officers are minimally prepared to meet the basic demands of military life. When a graduate of the ROCI program is placed in a demanding active duty billet, after just three weeks of training,

the officer may be unable to perform at the same level as a Coast Guard Academy, OCS, or DCO officer. To meet the needs of the Coast Guard and prepare the reserve officer for success, the current ROCI course should be replaced with a new program designed to meet the same criteria as the other accessions programs.

The ROCI program should be replaced with a program similar to the U.S. Marine Corps Platoon Leader Course Commission program. Under this program, college freshmen and sophomores must complete two six-week courses within a two year time period. As a college junior, the individual must complete a ten-week course. Finally, upon graduation, he or she must complete the Platoon Leader Course prior to commissioning. A similar program for the Coast Guard should end with the Coast Guard DCO course (rather than the Platoon Leader Course) prior to commissioning. The Coast Guard can utilize this program by selecting desirable students and setting up courses of leadership, seamanship, and technical expertise. This ensures that reserve officers are fully trained and indoctrinated in the same manner as their active duty peers.

Another option is to establish a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program similar to those used by the other military services. ROTC develops future officers in a traditional civilian university by using military and civilian instructors for service-specific courses. During the summer months, officer candidates participate in rigorous activities that incorporate classroom training and field experience. Four years of ROTC helps to transform a diverse group of civilians into confident military officers. A Coast Guard ROTC would promote the Coast Guard's core values, rich heritage, and basic tenets of leadership. A Coast Guard ROTC program would provide increased flexibility by

serving as an additional commissioning source for both the active duty and the reserve officer corps.

The Army has had proven success with its ROTC program. As of 2010, ROTC has commissioned more General Officers than any other Army commissioning program.²² Out of 385 General Officers, who are currently serving, 218 of these General officers were commissioned through the ROTC program.²³

Junior Officer: Initial Professional Development

The indoctrination of the reserve officer is just the beginning of a reserve officer's development. The indoctrination process only provides basic leadership skills. It is imperative officers receive further leadership development at this career milestone. As he or she joins the ranks of Coast Guard professionals, there are vital skill sets that need to be developed and strengthened. Leaders in the profession of arms place a high amount of effort on developing themselves and using the resources of the profession to develop others at all levels.²⁴

Junior Officer professional development should include continuing education, which emphasize the importance of communication, dynamic leadership, and interpersonal skills. The Coast Guard should develop basic and advanced formal courses in these skill areas and require successful completion of all learning objectives prior to the advancement to O-3. Mastering these skills should be acknowledged on officer performance evaluations and added to individual development plans.

Strong and effective communication skills, including writing, listening, and speaking are fundamental leadership skills. The development of these skill sets should begin prior to commissioning and continue into the early ranks (O-1 to O-2). Communication is an essential element for effective leadership and management. It is

detrimental to both the officer and the organization if the officer does not have the ability to effectively share his or her thoughts and ideas. If communication skills are not acquired early, the officer will not be able to reach his or her full potential.

Leadership, with an emphasis on adaptability, is critical, especially in these dynamic times. The Coast Guard has transformed itself since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, by transferring to the Department of Homeland Security, restructuring major field units, and by dramatically shifting mission priorities. The Coast Guard's successful transition during any time of change will depend on the leadership of its officers. Junior officers lead change and know how to initiate action to support a vision. Kotter in his book, *Leading Change*, states, "Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles."²⁵ A leader must have a clear vision and the ability to communicate it to a wide audience. A vision is of little value and usefulness if understood only by a few key personnel. A vision's full potential only can be realized when the majority involved share an understanding of goals and have a solid sense of direction.²⁶

Numerous case studies illustrate that the success of an endeavor hinges upon good relationships fostered by good interpersonal skills. An example was highlighted on August 2, 2007 when a bridge collapsed in Minneapolis. Local responders and leaders were able to response rapidly and immediately began a coordinated rescue. Lessoned learned showed that all the responders knew each other and had a good working relationship prior to the disaster.²⁷

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill was the worst oil spill in the United States' history. Local and National anger grew as millions of gallons of oil spilled into the Gulf of Mexico. Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen demonstrated positive interpersonal skills by becoming the voice of calm amidst the storm. He personally spoke with local and national leaders, addressed their issues, and served as a positive liaison.

Mid-Grade Officer: Technical Development and Expertise = The Column

As pictured in Figure 1, the main column of the light house is populated with mid-grade officers (O-3 – O-4). A key aspect of a mid-grade officer's development is obtaining technical expertise and certification. The majority of Coast Guard missions are planned, led, and executed by these mid-grade officers. Currently, there are disparities between the training that is provided to an active duty officer and training that is provided to a reserve officer - even though both officers are expected to accomplish the same missions.

Disparity in officer training and certification is an obvious problem within the marine safety mission. The marine safety mission encompasses many specialties including: commercial vessel inspection, regulatory oversight of hazardous cargo facilities, vessel dry dock examinations, and port security. When reserve junior officers are assigned to a Sector's marine safety mission, they may not have met basic required qualifications needed to execute the mission. In contrast, the active duty marine inspectors must have completed several months of formal classroom instruction, received extensive on the job training, and must have overseen numerous vessel dry dock repairs. Realistically, this extensive training which normally takes an active duty officer two years to complete cannot be completed by reserve officers during their Inactive Duty Training (IDT) "weekend drills" and their two weeks of annual active duty.

Reserve officers are at a clear disadvantage due to time, training, and resource constraints.

Forcing capable officers to become certified in marine safety specialties within thirty-nine days of intermittent training can threaten the successful execution of the mission. If reservists and active duty officers fail to maintain a general level of expertise and certification, they run the risk of losing their recognition as qualified professionals. After years of not being able to get certified, and getting passed over for promotion due to non-certification, reserve officers can become discouraged, lose job satisfaction, and eventually leave the Coast Guard.

During surge operations, valuable time and resources are lost when reservists are deployed who are unable to “join the fight” because they were never trained or certified to fulfill mission objectives. When the Coast Guard fails to perform required missions, the American public’s trust is lost. When trust is gone, the Coast Guard’s credibility and professionalism is diminished.

The Coast Guard should have one training standard for both active duty and reserve officers. If this is not possible due to current training constraints, an aggressive incentive program could be developed to encourage active duty officers, who have fulfilled their service obligation, to join the reserves. This will help the Coast Guard retain experienced, qualified, and certified personnel essential for operational reserve assignments. If equal training standards and certification requirements cannot be established, another option is for the Coast Guard to only assign reserve officers to missions that can be safely executed under current training and funding constraints.

There are certain missions that are better suited for Coast Guard reserve officers, such as the port security mission. Unlike the marine safety mission, Port Security Units (PSU) training and mission execution have been very successful under current reserve constraints.

PSUs are designed and trained to deploy within twenty-four hours. For sustained operations, PSUs can deploy within ninety-six hours. They are able to conduct OCONUS port security for the regional Combatant Commander and are experts in providing waterside protection for key infrastructures.²⁸ Each PSU has approximately one hundred and forty reservists and five active duty personnel. Reserve personnel train for contingency operations during IDT periods. PSUs engage in exercises and training during their two weeks of annual active duty.²⁹ They have proven to be a successful force multiplier in the Joint Force operational environment.

Mid-Grade Officer: Joint Force and Interagency Operations Professional Development

Mid-grade Coast Guard officers must begin to understand, operate, and think in terms of Joint Force operations. The Naval Operations Concept of 2010 states, “The Naval Service is comprised of the active and reserve components and the civilian personnel of the United States Navy, the United States Marine Corps and the United States Coast Guard.”³⁰ The United States Coast Guard Posture Statement emphasizes Coast Guard forces must assist U.S. Combatant Commanders by providing capabilities and resources while conducting or supporting naval warfare missions.³¹ As one of the sea services, the Coast Guard should be postured to participate in Joint Force operations in order to prevent conflict and ensure victory in war.

The Coast Guard is expected to participate in Joint Force operations. During Operation Unified Response, the Coast Guard provided six Cutters to support

humanitarian relief efforts in Haiti. Mid-grade reserve officer should be prepared and expected to participate in future Joint Forces operations. Gaining Joint Force knowledge is an important area of concentration in a reserve officer's professional development. Until Joint Force operation curriculums tailored to the Coast Guard are developed, the Coast Guard should take advantage of available Department of Defense (DoD) educational programs and courses. Completion of these courses should be a mandatory professional education requirement. Mid-grade Coast Guard officers would then have a firm understanding of Joint Force operations, the Joint Force environment, and the capabilities or limitations of all other Armed Services.

The Nation's security is dependent upon interagency cooperation, coordination, and integration efforts. Building unity of effort among homeland security agencies requires understanding and exercising of joint operations. Interagency cooperation must mature and extend beyond the Department of Defense.³² Several reserve officer billets should be identified and reprogrammed for officer exchange programs. Exchanges could take place between the Coast Guard, the Department of Defense, the State Department, and other government agencies. Strengthened interagency training and exposure can benefit homeland security as it has proved successful within the Department of Defense under Goldwater-Nichols.³³ Upon completion of their exchange program, reserve officers should have a follow-on tour at a joint command or other Homeland Security agencies. Insights gained from this experience will build upon Joint Force expertise, allowing better coordination between governmental agencies during future military operations. As resources shrink under economic constraints, forcing additional demands on the remaining Armed Services, Joint Force and interagency

operations will continue to grow. Successful mission execution will depend upon sharing resources and communicating in a seamless cooperative environment.

Senior Grade Officer Education = Beacon Light

As a leader matures, gains experience, and increases responsibility, his or her perspective must shift to the strategic level. In Figure 1, tactical/operational growth occurs between the ranks of O-3 and O-5. A strategic view and critical thinking skills are necessary for an officer who reaches the rank of O-6 and above.

According to the Institute for Alternative Futures, “Strategies are the most important coordinated sets of actions needed to reach goals, fulfill a mission and realize a vision”.³⁴ Senior leaders must be able to think strategically in order to answer tough questions, manage wicked problems, and address major issues that continually bombard their organizations. Senior service schools and war colleges prepare senior leaders to shift in “thinking from the operational and tactical to strategic service-wide policy development.”³⁵

Presently, Coast Guard reserve officer enrollment in senior service schools is too low. In the academic year 2010, the U.S. Army War College had no Coast Guard reserve students attending its Resident or Distance Education programs. The Air Force and U.S. Marine Corps War Colleges had only two Coast Guard reserve personnel enrolled in each of their Distance Education programs. The Coast Guard should send reserve officers to senior service schools. In addition, the Coast Guard should provide more opportunities for reserve officers to spend a year on an academic fellowship or complete internships at “think tanks”. The completion of a senior service school or equivalent level of higher education should be a significant consideration for promotion to O-6.

Coast Guard Reserve Wide Recommendations

The above recommendations above focused on three specific career milestones in a Coast Guard reserve officer's career. The Coast Guard, as a whole, should also consider a service-wide reformation to increase the capabilities of its reserve force. The recommendations below will demand dedicated resources and personnel to make them a reality. However, they would be an investment in today's Coast Guard reserve officers in order to meet the demands of 2020.

Reserve Program Administrators (RPA): Building Success, Focused Mentorship, and Career Guidance

Coast Guard reserves are assigned to active duty operational units. The administrative oversight, training, and development of reserve officers are a collateral duty of the active duty staff. This part-time focus does not serve the reserve program well. Reserves officers do not always receive the attention they require due to high operational tempos. Senior officers in the reserves frequently travel many miles to get to their assigned reserve units. Distance often hinders effective management of reserve forces. The Coast Guard should establish a cadre of full-time RPA personnel to manage, mentor, and guide the reserve force. The Coast Guard should increase the number of RPA officer billets to a minimum of one per Sector Command.

Increasing RPAs will ensure that the Sector's reservists (and operational units under the Sector's Command) have dedicated, full-time professionals managing their training, provide professional development, and operational needs. Other primary duties of RPAs would be to provide mentorship, conduct career counseling, and monitor the readiness of reserve personnel. RPAs could develop and track progress on reserve Individual Development Plans (IDPs). Additionally, RPAs could serve as liaisons to

coordinate resources from the active duty enabling the fulfillment of the IDPs. The RPA would also serve as an advisor to the Sector Commander regarding reserve issues. RPA officers could coordinate regularly with the active duty staff on current and planned operations to ensure the reserve officer arrives prepared for training and duty periods or to augment the active duty force during times of surge operations.

A Clear Career Path

The Coast Guard should develop a defined career path for Coast Guard reserve officers which outlines milestones consisting of developmental assignments, experience, responsibilities, education, and certification by grade.

The U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) acknowledges that there are clear distinctions between active duty officer's career paths and reserve officer's career paths. The same professional education and career experience opportunities do not exist in both organizations. As a result, the USAR developed a Leader Development Guide (LDG). The LDG table lays out military education, civilian education, career milestones, goals, and requirements for each career field. The guide can be accessed by any Army reservist from the Human Resource Command web page. For example, the USAR LDG indicates that a reserve transportation officer is expected to be a platoon leader at the O-1 or O-2 level, a company commander at O-3, an executive officer at O-4, and a commander at O-5 or O-6. During this time frame (O-1 thru O-6), this reserve officer should have completed four specified professional military educational courses and completed his or her civilian educational goal of a bachelor's and a master's degree. The guide also specifies minimum and maximum promotion and time in grade timelines so an officer can gauge his or her career progression. The Coast Guard reserve officer program should develop the same type of career guide and have it accessible on an

interactive website. If a clear and attainable career path cannot be developed for the Coast Guard reserve officer due to training or resource constraints, then that career path should be eliminated from the reserve program and become exclusive to active duty officers.

To ensure officer development and professionalism, the Coast Guard should establish Officer Professional Military Education Guidelines (OPMEG). The OPMEG establishes a timeline for achieving educational requirements necessary prior to advancement. For example, prior to promotion to LCDR (O-4), officers should have a bachelor's degree. Promotion boards should take into consideration and give higher preference to officers who have completed recommended educational guidelines.

Balancing Act: Rotational Readiness and Operations

The Coast Guard reserve program can improve readiness and provide extensive training, certification, and professional education by developing a rotational readiness program. This would be similar to the U.S. Army's "Army Force Generation" (ARFORGEN) model.³⁶ Reserve officers should be placed in three separate groups and the status of each group will change every twelve months. One group would be on active duty as necessary attending resident training, obtaining certifications, participating in professional development, or deploying. The second group would be on standby for immediate activation for surge operations. This group would be on heightened readiness status while still on regular reserve drilling status. The third group would be on regular drilling status, maintaining certifications, and completing civilian/military educational goals at their regular reserve duty station. This group would also be completing command assignments, filling career essential positions according to their LDG, and maintaining a stable work/life balance. This concept ensures ready

and certified pools of reserve officers are available every three years who are ready and able to execute active duty missions. This rotation will encourage certification, facilitate professional development, and will keep reserve officers operationally current.

Establishment of a Coast Guard Senior Service School

When a Coast Guard officer (reserve or active duty) is fortunate enough to attend a military senior service school, he or she primarily focuses on the Department of Defenses' principal issues, and there is little emphasis on Department of Homeland Security concerns.

It is time for the Coast Guard to revisit the way it prepares officers for senior leadership positions and should consider establishing a senior service school³⁷ for senior Commanders (O-5) and junior Captains (O-6). The senior service school would begin small and grow as capability and capacity develops. A senior service school allows junior officers (specialists) to transition to senior officer (generalists), a senior service college will help breakdown organizational boundaries and develop leaders as critical and strategic thinkers.³⁸ Specific Coast Guard interests and outcomes can be the focus of the curriculum.

The Coast Guard is a unique service with specialized safety and security missions which set it apart from Department of Defense. Coast Guard personnel are required to interact with domestic maritime civilian populations, maritime businesses, and governmental and non-governmental organizations.³⁹ This interaction dynamically changes with each situation. In one day, a Coast Guard officer's job can go from enforcing federal law by arresting drug smugglers to hours later rescuing a mariner on the high seas.

Senior officers must be confident and willing to engage in the Coast Guard's "five spheres" of influence. These spheres are military, business, federal and local governments, non-government agencies, and foreign nations. A Coast Guard officer can learn from each sphere and he or she must understand and utilize best practices from each. A Coast Guard senior service college could build a curriculum to do this.⁴⁰

Like other senior service schools, the Coast Guard should establish a research and analysis center and staff it with strategic civilian, DHS, and Coast Guard thinkers. This center's role would be to provide expertise for the senior service school and function as the Service's "strategy incubator" for growing, building, and developing strategies for the future.⁴¹

A Coast Guard senior service school would serve as a strategic center of excellence for developing Coast Guard doctrine for each of its core missions. For instance, a Coast Guard senior service school would be an institution for system analysis to build on the strategic objectives behind the Deepwater program (fleet modernization) and develop synergistic methods for making Coast Guard operations more efficient.⁴² Another area of emphasis would be to examine maritime accidents and develop effective safety measures.⁴³

This strategic center of excellence could develop a scanning product similar to the one produced by the Joint Forces Command, called the Joint Operating Environment (JOE). This product forecasts key trends in the operational environment and examine trends ranging from demographics and pandemics to cyber and space.⁴⁴ Also, a Coast Guard strategic center of excellence could complete a process called futuring. The futuring process involves identifying positive or negative trends which then

allows senior leaders to develop strategies to take advantage of or mitigate the predicted trend. Thinking through challenges ahead of time allows for preparation of personnel, development of a vision, the gathering of resources, and the sharing of strategic communication needed to overcome the crisis.

The Coast Guard senior service school should be modeled after other military senior service colleges offering a residential education program (REP) and a distance education program (DEP). The REP would be ten months in duration and would require the completion of individual core and elective courses and the submission of a written research project. The DEP would require students to complete individual core and elective courses, participate in on-line forums, submit a written research project, and attend two resident phases. Once all these requirements have been satisfied, the student will have the tools a strategic thinker needs.

Navy Admiral Gregory Johnson said it best when he discussed senior level education while addressing a graduating class at the U.S. Naval War College:

I began to think about the business that I was in. I was no longer just a pilot trying to fill up my log book; I was a member of the national security profession, and in my view, national security was the nation's highest calling...The aim (of the Naval War College) is to simply invite officers to meet together to discuss questions pertaining to higher branches of their professions and to each other, according to his or her inclination, to prepare for the highest and most responsible duties that can be devolve upon a naval officer. That is exactly what this institution did for me. It extended my horizons to the higher branches of this profession, and I will ever be in its debt.⁴⁵

Conclusion

RDML Sandra L. Stosz's vision may become a reality by 2020 if the Coast Guard implements some of the recommendations proposed for the three critical career milestones and the Service. These recommendations would require considerable

resources, commitment, and funding, however it would be an investment in the Coast Guard's future. This paper discussed the concepts of professionalism and officership and examined three reserve officer career milestone: accessions/indoctrination, mid-grade officer technical expertise and development, and senior leader education. Recommendations for improving training and developing Coast Guard reserve officers for 2020 have been presented with the objective of making them full-fledged members of the Coast Guard team.

Endnotes

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